

Special Weekly Column for May 2, 2008

We are on a special weekly column roll!

We had a wonderful announcement yesterday detailing the inaugural Troy Pig Out, a New York State Barbecue Championship sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbecue Society. Mark your calendars for Saturday July 19th and Sunday July 20th for a party in downtown Troy.

To kickoff the announcement we had a cookout in front of City Hall, and were joined by Tosca Chef Larry Shepici, and Chef's Solutions Jim Rhoads who are working closely with the City to organize the Pig Out

On the third weekend of July, the streets surrounding Monument Square will be closed from Friday evening until Sunday night, as competitors prepare for the main competition, which will take place Sunday morning and afternoon. We are expecting more than 30 barbecue "professionals" from around the Northeast to compete in the inaugural event, which has received the blessing of Governor David Paterson and will be a New York State Championship.

We have raised the bar in the last four years when it comes to creating special events to bring people to Troy. Whether it is the River Street Festival or the Chowderfest we look forward to teaming up with enthusiastic business owners, merchants, and residents to create excitement and buzz for Troy.

The Pig Out will be broken down into two separate days of family friendly fun. On Saturday, the City will host the Backyard BBQ competition, featuring the "professional" enthusiasts, as well as local competitors featuring restaurants, neighborhood groups, individuals, and even your next door neighbor. The cost of the entry for the Backyard BBQ will be \$25, and entrants will compete by **grilling** in four different categories- beef, chicken, pizza, and vegetables. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

After the Backyard BBQ, the fun will continue well into Saturday evening on the streets of downtown, with music, vendors, and family entertainment filling the streets. The night will be capped off by fireworks on the Hudson River. An announcement concerning musical acts is expected in the coming weeks.

The Sunday portion of the Pig Out will be the day that the New York State Champion is crowned. With barbecue enthusiasts travelling from around the area to participate, organizers have created four categories- in addition to Saturday's grilling event- in which they will compete. The entry fee for each category is \$75, though to be eligible for the Grand Champion and Reserve Championship prize money, competitors must enter all four categories- pork, chicken, beef brisket, and pork ribs.

The tournament is expected to give away more than \$5,000 in prize money. Throughout the day on Sunday, visitors to the Pig Out will get a sneak peek at what it takes to win a BBQ Championship. They will also be treated to music throughout the day, a variety of vendors, and a number of other street festival amenities so that the entire family, not just the barbecue enthusiast, can enjoy the day.

If anyone is interested in participating, applications for the New York State Championship are available at www.visittroyny.com and must be received by June 23rd, 2008. There is a limit of 45 teams. Applications for the Saturday Backyard BBQ are due by July 1st, and there is no limit to the number of teams.

Proceeds from the event, which is sponsored by the City of Troy, Tosca, Chef's Solutions, and the Troy Downtown Collaborative will be donated to The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

I look forward to entering the Saturday competition and seeing where I stand among the residents in the Capital District that consider barbecue and grilling true hobbies. We are excited about the possibilities this event holds, and look forward to welcoming new people to the City of Troy to see the exciting and eclectic urban environment that exists here today.

Any vendors interested in participating in the event should contact Chef Rhoads at 518-423-1194 or Jeff Buell at 518-270-4554.

It should be an exciting week! Don't forget that the 3rd Annual Striped Bass Fishing Tournament takes place this Sunday!

Have a great weekend.

Harry J Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy